

# JACK'S BACK

**He's 54 years old, but Tom Cruise can outrun most actors half his age. "When you do a Tom Cruise film you better be prepared to run. . . A lot," laughs Cobie Smulders, who plays an army ranger on the lam with Cruise in *Jack Reacher* sequel, *Never Go Back*. Words Gill Pringle**

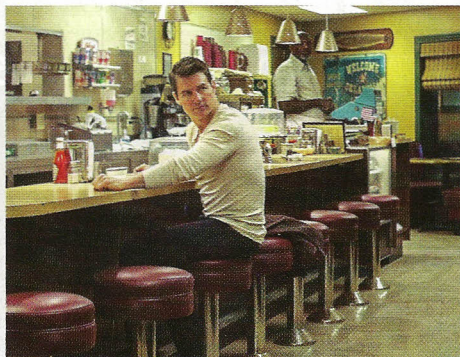
**T**om is like a bullet, he is so fast. Day one, we started on the treadmill, and we had to push it to 21 miles an hour, and then do that sixty times. It was very intense. Honestly, I don't know how I did it," says Cobie Smulders, 34, who broke her leg prior to shooting.

"It was so stupid, I always injure myself when I'm just walking down the street, but I was in my apartment and I just tripped over something, and snapped my tibia, so I was on crutches for six weeks. A week later I was in the gym with Tom Cruise, probably the weakest physical shape I've ever been in my life," shudders the actress best known for her role as Agent Maria Hill in the *Avengers* films.

When Cruise first debuted as *Jack Reacher* on the big screen four years ago, fans of Lee Childs' action novels were angry that he was a good six inches shorter than their solitary paperback hero. But the box office was more forgiving of the diminutive action star, compelling Cruise to revisit Reacher four years later. This time around he has two women in tow – a daughter portrayed by newcomer Danika Yarosh, and Smulders as his former army colleague who he breaks out of a military prison.

A TV actor and former dancer, Yarosh, 18, describes her big screen debut as "probably the best first experience ever."

"Tom took me under his wing and taught



me about everything, in every different field," she adds. "Usually on set, you learn by observing, but Tom actually took it upon himself to full on teach me, especially with stunt work."

"If he was doing a big stunt, even if I wasn't in it, he would make sure that I was on set, and have me right next to the cameraman, so he could teach me about angles, and how stunts work, and how to keep yourself safe; he even had me training with the stunt crew, just so I learned for future work."

As with most Cruise projects over the past decade, the star himself is not present for any print interviews, leaving director Edward Zwick and his co-stars to do the talking when *STACK* meets with them in Los Angeles.

Zwick has a long history with Cruise, first working together on *The Last Samurai*. "Some actors

## NOT SLOWING DOWN

**Far from being on cruise control, Tom Cruise is putting the pedal to the metal. Check out the action projects he's got in the works:**

### *The Mummy*

The latest reimagining of the Universal monster movie will star Cruise, taking on a resurrected Egyptian played by sexy *Star Trek: Beyond* star Sofia Boutella.

### *American Made*

Re-teaming with *Edge of Tomorrow* director Doug Liman, this escapade is set in the heady wild frontier days of 1980s drug running in Colombia.

### *M:I 6 - Mission Impossible*

Following the 2015 smash *Rogue Nation*, a return to this blockbuster franchise was a no brainer.

### *Top Gun 2*

Taking it back to where it all started. Maverick and Iceman, but no sign of Kenny Loggins... yet.

are piggish, wanting all the good scenes for themselves but Tom is generous to a fault. I warned Cobie that to encounter the force of nature that is Tom Cruise, you've got to be chilled, and she totally got that," says Zwick, whose previous films include *Blood Diamond* and *Legends of the Fall*, earning a Best Picture Oscar as a producer on *Shakespeare in Love*.

*Never Go Back*, he says, has a 1970's feel. "It's more down and dirty, more 'meat and potato', stuff which requires even more training, because there's a lot of fighting and it's hard to do when he's in his 50's, doing it all himself."

As to the matter of size, Zwick believes Cruise has more than compensated for his missing inches.

"I recall the controversy when the first Reacher came out – but when we released a trailer for this movie, we had 75 million hits! And all that says to me is that those Reacher fans, after a certain point, have now just accepted the fact that that's what it is. A lot of times, where you see an actor play a part, your initial reserve is either won over, or it's not. Either you accept it, or you don't."

➔ ***Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*** is in cinemas on Oct 20.